

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An artificial disc prosthesis system comprising:
 - (a) a stabilizing element; and
 - (b) a scaffold assembly comprising:
 - (i) a first base adapted to attach to a first vertebrae;
 - (ii) a second base adapted to attach to a second vertebrae; and
 - (iii) at least one appendage removably attached to the first or the second base, such that the first base, the second base and the at least one appendage define a cage between the first and second vertebrae; wherein the stabilizing element is retained in the cage without being rigidly attached to the scaffold assembly, and wherein the stabilizing element may be removed from the cage through an opening created by removing at least one of the appendages.
2. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis.
3. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the stabilizing element is a fusion prosthesis.
- 4-7. (Cancelled).
8. (Previously Presented) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the scaffold assembly further comprises a first plate positioned above the stabilizing element and a second plate positioned below the stabilizing element, the second plate disposed opposite and in substantially parallel relation to the first plate, such that the stabilizing element is retained between the first and second plates.

9. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 8, wherein the first plate and the second plate have high friction outer surfaces.

10. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 8, wherein the first plate and the second plate have low friction outer surfaces.

11. (Withdrawn) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis comprising a concave surface attached to a first prosthesis base by at least one flexible support and a complementary convex surface disposed on a second prosthesis base positioned opposite the first prosthesis base, wherein the concave surface and the convex surface form a rotating joint, and further wherein the at least one flexible support is capable of flexing to provide shock absorption when the artificial disc prosthesis system is disposed between two vertebra.

12. (Withdrawn) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 11, wherein the concave surface is attached to the first prosthesis base by two or more flexible supports.

13. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the scaffold assembly comprises a material selected from metal, ceramic and plastic.

14. (Original) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the scaffold assembly comprises a material selected from cobalt chrome or titanium.

15. (Previously Presented) A method for revising a stabilizing element in the artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, the method comprising:

- (a) removing a first stabilizing element from the cage; and
- (b) inserting a second stabilizing element into the cage.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the first stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis and the second stabilizing element is a fusion prosthesis.

17-26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) An artificial disc prosthesis system comprising:

- (a) a stabilizing means for stabilizing two adjoining vertebrae in the absence of a vertebral disc; and
- (b) a retaining means for removably retaining the stabilizing means when the artificial disc prosthesis system is disposed between two vertebrae, wherein the retaining means comprises a removably attached appendage and is capable of accommodating stabilizing means of a plurality of shapes and sizes.

28. (Previously Presented) The artificial disc prosthesis of claim 1, wherein the scaffold assembly comprises at least two appendages attached to the first or the second base.

29. (Previously Presented) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein the first and second bases are ring-shaped.

30. (Currently Amended) An artificial disc prosthesis system comprising:

- (a) a stabilizing element; and
- (b) a scaffold assembly comprising:
 - (i) a first base adapted to attach to a first vertebrae;
 - (ii) a second base adapted to attach to a second vertebra; and
 - (iii) one or more appendages removably coupled to the scaffold assembly and extending into an intervertebral space, such that the first base, the second base and the one or more appendages define a cage in the intervertebral space;

wherein the stabilizing element is retained in the cage without being rigidly attached to the scaffold assembly and further wherein the ~~alignment of the one or more~~ appendages may be removed ~~adjusted~~ to provide an opening into or out of which the stabilizing element may be inserted or extracted.

31. (Previously Presented) A method for revising a stabilizing element in the artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 30, the method comprising:

- (a) removing a first stabilizing element from the cage; and
- (b) inserting a second stabilizing element into the cage.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the first stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis and the second stabilizing element is a fusion prosthesis.

33. (Currently Amended) An artificial disc prosthesis system comprising:

- (a) a stabilizing element; and
- (b) a scaffold assembly comprising:
 - (i) a first base adapted to attach to a first vertebra;
 - (ii) a second base adapted to attach to a second vertebra; and
 - (iii) at least two appendages removably coupled to the scaffold assembly and extending into an intervertebral space, such that the first base, the second base and the at least two appendages define a cage in the intervertebral space;

wherein the stabilizing element is retained in the cage without being rigidly attached to the scaffold assembly and wherein the stabilizing element may be removed from the cage through an opening created by removing at least one of the appendages.

34. (Previously Presented) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 33, wherein the appendages comprise at least one buttress attached to each of the first and second bases.

35. (Previously Presented) The artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 33, wherein the buttresses may be attached to the first or second bases at different positions or alignments.

36. (Previously Presented) A method for revising a stabilizing element in the artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 33, the method comprising:

- (a) removing a first stabilizing element from the cage; and
- (b) inserting a second stabilizing element into the cage.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the first stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis and the second stabilizing element is a fusion prosthesis.

38. (Currently Amended) An artificial disc prosthesis system comprising:

- (a) a stabilizing element; and

(b) a scaffold assembly adapted to be attached to an endplate of at least one of two vertebrae that define an intervertebral space and comprising at least one removably attached appendage to removably retain the stabilizing element in the intervertebral space; wherein the scaffold assembly is capable of accommodating stabilizing elements of a plurality of shapes and sizes, and wherein the stabilizing elements may be removed from the scaffold assembly through an opening created by removing at least one of the appendages.

39. (Previously Presented) A method for revising a stabilizing element in the artificial disc prosthesis system of claim 38, the method comprising:

- (a) removing a first stabilizing element from the scaffold assembly; and
- (b) inserting a second stabilizing element into the scaffold assembly.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the first stabilizing element is a disc prosthesis and the second stabilizing element is a fusion prosthesis.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the first stabilizing element can be removed by an anterior or a lateral approach and the second stabilizing element can be inserted by an anterior or a lateral approach.

42. (Cancelled).